



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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KLAMATH SETTLEMENT ANNOUNCED

Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman today announced settlement of the land jurisdiction problem in the area which lies both in the Klamath and Tule Lake Wildlife Refuge and the Klamath Irrigation project in Oregon and California.

This problem was created by the need to retain the irrigated lands of the refuges in public ownership for the benefit of wildlife conservation. The area is one of the key waterfowl concentration points in the Pacific Flyway.

There have been competing demands for the opening of these public lands for homesteading under Reclamation law.

Secretary Chapman directed that 6,700 acres of the 59,000-acre area, a large part of which is water area will be opened for homesteading as soon as possible. The balance will remain in the wildlife refuges, not subject to homesteading. Twenty-five hundred acres of the land to be homesteaded lies in California, near the town of Tule Lake. The remaining acreage is in Oregon, north of the State boundary.

A copy of Secretary Chapman's directive to the Bureau of Reclamation and the Fish and Wildlife Service follows:

"I have considered carefully the proposals made by your respective agencies relative to the disposition of lands which lie both in the Klamath Irrigation Project and the Tule Lake and Lower Klamath Wildlife Refuges. The basic issue here is whether any or all of these lands should be opened to entry under the reclamation homestead acts or should be retained in the refuges and kept under cultivation in the present leasing system.

"The lands involved are among the finest public lands for agricultural purposes under irrigation in the West. They could provide farms and homes for veterans under the homesteading program of the Bureau of Reclamation.

"On the other hand, the area is one of the key waterfowl concentration points on the North American Continent. It is indispensable for the maintenance of the Pacific Flyway.

"More irrigation development in the area is needed to provide both for increased waterfowl conservation and for more homesteading opportunities. Investigations are now under way by the Department of water resources in the Upper and Lower Klamath River Basins. It is hoped that these investigations will result in the development of additional irrigated lands so that waterfowl conservation areas and homesteading opportunities can both be augmented.

"Meanwhile, the immediate problem is to be resolved by the following directives:

"The Fish and Wildlife Service shall:

1. Take steps as appropriate to take over by January 1, 1954, the administration of those lands in the Tule Lake and Lower Klamath Refuges which are now administered by the Bureau of Reclamation and which are not to be opened for homesteading. Any leases of these lands shall be on a cash basis with careful attention to the avoidance of land monopoly or corporate farming. Such leases should be on a basis which will realize maximum revenues consistent with conservation of wildlife and the public land.
2. Remit all revenues derived from the leasing of these lands for deposit in the Reclamation Fund to be credited against the project construction cost pursuant to provisions of law.
3. Be responsible directly, or, by the terms of its leases, through the lessees for remittance to the project superintendent of the Bureau of Reclamation annual operation and maintenance or water rental payments in the amounts and at the times required by public notice.
4. As soon as possible provide increased funds and more personnel for cooperation with the Bureau of Reclamation in the investigations now under way by the Bureau of Reclamation of the Upper and Lower Klamath River Basins. One of the principal objectives of these investigations will be to discover and develop irrigated lands suitable for the production of grain for wildfowl feed.

"The Bureau of Reclamation shall:

1. Take appropriate steps to homestead as soon as practicable the following areas:
 - a. All of the lands in the Klamath Straits Unit except approximately 1,770 acres in the half-sections bordering the Oregon-California State line, and
 - b. Approximately 2,500 acres in the League of Nations Tract.

This will make a total available for immediate homesteading of approximately 6,700 acres. All other lands in the Tule Lake and Lower Klamath Refuges are to be utilized for the conservation of the wildlife resource, subject to the deposit of revenues as provided for in paragraph 2 of the preceding section.

2. Intensify the investigations now being made of the Upper and Lower Klamath River Basins and re-orient these investigations wherever necessary so as to have as a primary objective the discovery and development of lands suitable for the production of wildlife feed under irrigation.
3. Continue the leasing of all lands leased by the Bureau of Reclamation in the area in 1952 for a period ending on December 31, 1953, in a manner that will be consistent with homestead entry of the above-described 6,700 acres and also in a manner that will be consistent with the taking over by the Fish and Wildlife Service on January 1, 1954, of the leasing of the lands to remain in the refuges.

4. As funds are available, proceed with the present plan of flood protection in the Tule Lake Area, and such irrigation construction as may be necessary to serve the 6,700 acres to be homesteaded in the Klamath Straits and Tule Lake areas, and maintain and operate all irrigation, drainage, and flood protective works in the entire area. Provide water service for the wildlife refuge lands on a cost basis for operation and maintenance or water rental comparable to that applicable to other project lands and in amounts, to the extent permitted by law, comparable to the amounts of water supplied other project lands.

"By copy of this memorandum, the Solicitor is requested to draft executive orders, in cooperation with the Bureau of Reclamation, the Fish and Wildlife Service and interested divisions of the Secretary's office, modifying the boundaries of the Tule Lake and Lower Klamath Wildlife Refuges so as to exclude from them the lands to be homesteaded, as described above, and to include in the Lower Klamath Refuge approximately 225 acres of public land south of Sheepy Lake. These orders should be drafted so that the continued use of the refuges for wildlife purposes shall not be subordinated to use for reclamation homestead purposes.

"Previous instructions relative to the homesteading program on the Klamath Project are rescinded.

"You are directed to submit for approval by the Secretary a new memorandum of agreement on management of Klamath lands to supersede the present one between your agencies approved in 1942. The new agreement should be consistent with the above directives and continue those administrative arrangements incorporated in the present agreement which are not in conflict with these directives.

"The Appropriations Committees of the Congress will be notified of these directives."

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